

Export manual 2007

Your Image Builder

A guide for establishing and improving commercial images



Centre for the Promotion of
Imports from developing countries

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improving commercial images

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Why 'Your Image Builder'?

In an effort to get in touch with or to maintain contacts with (potential) business partners you can choose from an array of communication tools: from mailing letters to telemarketing, from simple leaflets to elaborate websites, from fast electronic mail to participation in fairs and exhibitions. As a result of using any of these 'tools of communication' you will leave the contact person with a personal, printed, audio-visual or virtual message. That message will create a certain impression of you, your company, your sector and in many cases even your country. As the objective of your business communication will most likely be to create, maintain or enhance a favourable IMAGE with the person(s) targeted, it is of the utmost importance to pay careful attention to the way your messages reflect the IDENTITY of your company.

'Your Image Builder' is a practical guide that provides small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) with practical tools to present themselves to (potential) business partners in Europe efficiently and effectively. It will help you establish and build the desired image through printed media, electronic communication and personal performances.

*'Your Image Builder':
a practical guide for SMEs
to improve their image*

The path along which this guide will lead you runs from awareness of the existence and importance of Corporate Identity and Corporate Image to how they can be influenced by the various communication media. You will come across all the major aspects of using tools of communication such as letters, fax messages, brochures, folders, product sheets, catalogues, newsletters, e-mail messages, CD-ROMs, websites and others. Besides that, 'Your Image Builder' offers guidelines for business occasions at which you yourself are an important image carrier, such as personal visits, networking events, phone calls or trade fairs.

We will not focus specifically on radio or TV, as these media tend not to be used by the SME target group of 'Your Image Builder'.

Although the EU comprises a great number of countries, each of which has its own history, culture and customs, and all of which have a bearing on how business is conducted, we trust this publication will nevertheless prove useful to you as a guide to correct and professional presentations throughout the EU.

If you wish to delve deeper into the subject, please take a look at the list of literature references on the final page.

1

Identity versus image

1.1 Corporate identity

Corporate identity is how a company wants to be perceived
Corporate image is how the company is perceived

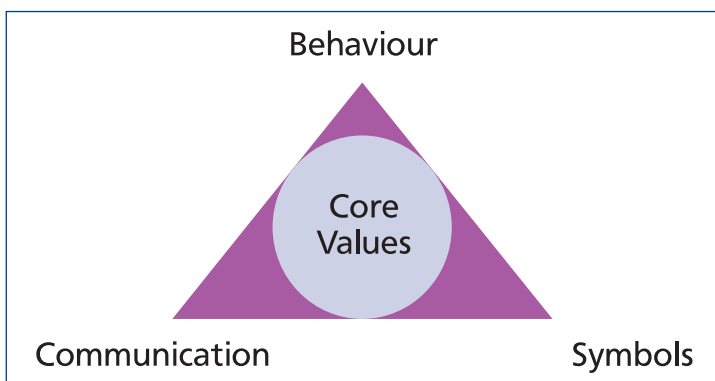
The way in which your company conducts business in the broadest sense forms its corporate identity. Your corporate identity is in your own hands; you can create and control it. There are many ways in which to convey this identity to third parties: through direct experience, such as telephone and personal contacts, through correspondence, printed matter or the supplying of services, but also through indirect contacts, such as the press or business relations.

you could say that your image is the spin-off of your identity

The perception third parties have of your company, their confidence in and appreciation of your company, all determine your corporate image. In other words, your image is your company's external projection. It emanates to a high degree from your identity, but you can exercise considerable influence on it. The identity you have developed has an indirect, but strong influence on the image formed by others of your company. You could say that your image is the spin-off of your identity.

1.1.1. Building up your corporate identity

Corporate identity is composed of the following elements: core values, behaviour, symbols and communication. Together, they determine your company's identity. They are also the elements on which the outside world bases its perception of your identity. A good image, therefore, begins 'at home'.



Core values

Your 'core values' are the pillars your company's identity rests on. They are based on your fundamental managerial decisions concerning both daily activities and long-term objectives. Core values can consist of the following factors: mission statement, business policy, company strategy, organisational structure, products and services, office facilities, people and their behaviour, communication and your company's code of conduct. Your 'core values' are expressed in your behaviour, communication and symbols.

Behaviour

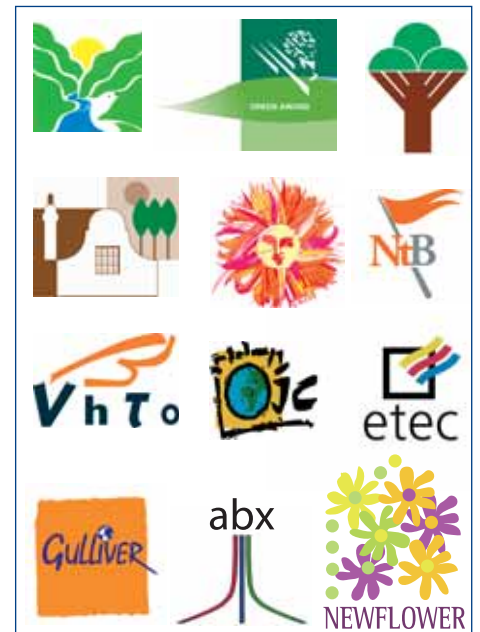
Your organisation's behavioural pattern emanates from its very essence. Culture, traditions, procedures, standards and values, and your style of management together form a number of trend-setting aspects of organisational behaviour (corporate conduct). Your company's objectives also play a leading role.

Symbols

Corporate symbols include your organisation's logo, the design of your letters, brochures, business cards, your website and other graphics. Details such as letterheads, the fonts you use and the placing of the logo also play a part.

Communication

The style in which your organisation communicates with its surroundings is another pillar on which its identity rests. Style has a lot to do with 'tone of voice'. Is your communication style open, honest and correct? Are enquiries, requests, complaints and suchlike swiftly answered, and by which means of communication? Are there no incongruities in your communication? And is it possible for others to make personal contact?



1.1.2 Managing identity

Determining and monitoring your company's corporate identity demands constant attention. Consistency is the keyword and it is vitally important that everyone in your company is thoroughly aware of this. Effective corporate promotion is all about repetition and recognition of the same identity and message. Every opportunity to create a good identity for your company should be used in a consistent way, in line with the desired image. Always bear in mind that there is much more to this than product promotion. Increasingly, it is corporate promotion, that is the promotion of your company, staff and services as a whole, that makes the difference.

how you promote your company as a whole is what makes the difference

1.2 Building your corporate image

What is so important about your image? Having a positive image is of the utmost importance not only for your success in contacts with partners in your own country but even more so with partners abroad. Your company can only continue to exist and thrive if it has the cooperation of other parties: customers, employees, suppliers, banks and so on. All of these are more likely to cooperate if they have a positive impression of your company.

it takes years to build a positive image and seconds to ruin one

The use of a logo or trademark on correspondence immediately reflects a company's corporate identity for many people. However, your company's 'face' is visible in many other ways as well: your behaviour, communication and symbols together determine your identity and, indirectly, your image. Your image is not only made visible by printed material, electronic (virtual) expressions or your office set-up. Non-written communication, such as the way in which employees behave, complaints are dealt with and correspondence is handled, all influence the image which the outside world forms of your company.

make sure your image is positive and tallies with reality

In order to function well, it is vital that your company has a positive image and that this image tallies with reality. The image you yourself have of your company and the image formed by your clients (the relation between the corporate identity and the corporate image) have to be in agreement. A great deal of your communication efforts should be directed towards bringing about this agreement. All too often, companies try to present a beautiful image of themselves that simply does not reflect reality. You should avoid this rigorously.

<p>A generally desired image in the EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dynamic and innovative • reliable and well-established • committed to long-term relationships • a creative and pro-active partner • good listeners • analytical problem-solvers
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An image is often determined on the 'front line'. Prime examples of front line image makers include how incoming phone calls from customers/clients are handled (easy accessibility?), behaviour at a trade fair (active, attentive?), the processing of complaints (customer-friendly, service-minded?), and other situations in which direct personal contact occurs. It is, therefore, important to give your personnel clear instructions regarding external communication.

in many cases your image is determined on the 'front line' of doing business

Instruction manuals and courses on this subject – as a part of an overall communication strategy – can help you prevent your carefully built-up image from being shattered in a single blow. In designing an overall communication strategy of this kind, consider carefully which communication media to use, when to activate them, what the ultimate objective is to be, what budget you can make available and, equally important, how to measure results.

1.2.1 Image building campaigns

It will be clear by now that you cannot leave your corporate identity to evolve by chance. It has to be carefully considered and managed on a long-term basis. You may also wish to consider developing a sound 'image-building campaign' or bringing in a specialised agency to handle it.

you cannot leave the formation and use of your identity to chance

The objective of an image-building campaign is to convey the desired image in the best possible way to your target group. The campaign should result in a clear, positive company image that distinguishes your company from the competition. An effective campaign is a strong instrument for exerting influence on your image. Before setting out, consider what the 'focus', the core aspect of your image, is to be. Under the sub-heading 1.2 'Building your corporate identity', we have already identified a number of core values on which your company can focus.

It is important to realise that corporate image campaigns are at least as important as product promotional activities, especially if your company is still unknown. With competition between products increasing by the day, your corporate image could make the difference. So determine your image first. Remember that in business-to-business contacts, the image of your company is as important as the image of your product – or even more so.

Campaigns are generally built around a so-called ‘promotional mix’: a combination of different instruments, deployed at different stages. In applying a combination of those instruments, consistency and repetition are of the utmost importance.

repetition and consistency are key words

Below you will find a few useful campaign instruments.

1.2.2 The company logo

A good logo is a strong means of supporting your company’s identity in the outside world. It consists of a symbol of which the design, typography and colour(s) are the deciding factors. A very simple way of creating a logo is to use your company name in a particular and consistently applied typography. Some professionals, like accountants and lawyers, prefer this kind of logo as it suggests honesty and reliability.

Bearing in mind the importance of the professional appearance of your logo, we recommend that you commission a specialist designer to create it. Needless to say that you must give the specialist a well-prepared and thorough briefing on the desired image.

There are logos which most people in the world can visualise without even seeing them, such as the logos of Apple, Coca-Cola, IBM, Nike, McDonalds. We have them imprinted in our minds. Of course, the fact that these logos are shown to us over and over again helps a lot. But the design itself is perhaps even more important.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is simple • grabs attention • is unique • is not too obvious • relates to the business or values of your company • creates a positive image • is timeless • consists of just a few colours • uses a limited number of fonts • looks good on different media and materials • looks good in different sizes and in black and white print 	<p>A good company logo design in the EU</p>



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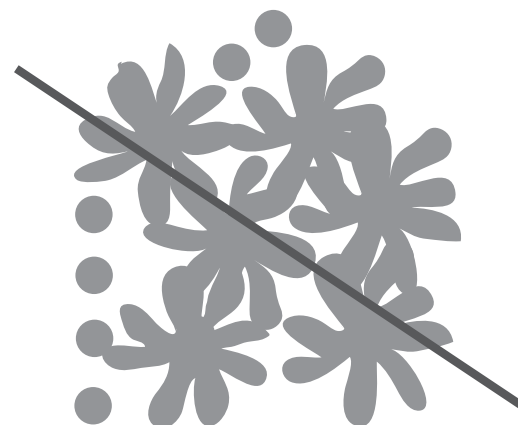
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1.2.3 Your unique selling proposition

Imagine that three suppliers provide the same service or deliver the same product. Which one do you choose? The cheapest? Not necessarily! You will probably order from the firm that has convinced you it is different from the other two in the sense of offering you an exclusive added value – the company that has convinced you it is unique and without alternative.

That single appealing idea that sets you and your business apart from the competition is called your Unique Selling Proposition (USP). A USP that dynamically addresses an obvious void in the marketplace can make a true difference in establishing your company's image.

The USP serves two purposes. Not only do your customers and prospects know why to choose you, but also your employees know what is expected from them.

The possibilities for building a USP are numerous. But still it is not easy, as proven by the fact that most companies do not have a USP and have settled for a 'me too' approach that feeds solely on market momentum. A unique product feature will not convince; a unique customer benefit will! Excellent service, sharp prices and top quality will make you beneficial to customers, but not unique. Your competitor can provide all that, too. Remember that your USP is all about your customer, not about you. Do not make the mistake of aggrandising your business. Instead, get your customer or client to do some aggrandising for you.

Answering the following questions will help you create your USP:

- What do our customers expect from our products or services?
- Which USPs do our competitors use?
- Which characteristics do we find unique about our company, products or services?
- Which advantages do these characteristics offer our customers?
- Which USP is the most difficult one for competitors to copy?
- Can we really fulfil the promise of the USP?

Have you determined your USP? Then use it and prove it! Continuously! Communicate your USP in a baseline (if possible), in press releases, in business letters, in web texts and so on. And demonstrate your USP through behaviour, special promotions, after sales services and so on.

1.2.4 An effective corporate slogan

A slogan is a catch phrase or small group of words that are combined in a special way to identify a product or company.

Using corporate slogans to stimulate growth is common practice among big companies throughout the world. There is, however, no reason why as an SME you cannot do the same. In fact, the flexibility, low costs and high effectiveness of slogans virtually make slogans a must for companies of any size.

The simple test of determining whether you've created a good USP for your business is whether it sells for you! In other words when it leads to a 'Unique Buying Reason'

USP but no slogan:
"We Always Have 168 different Widgets in No Less than 12 Different Sizes and 10 Desirable Colors, in price ranges from \$6 to \$600". (Jay Abraham)

USP and slogan:
"All you need for all you want" (Yellow Pages)

"When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight."
(FedEx)

BSOs play an important role in establishing a positive country image

A slogan can be very effective in drawing attention and making clear at a glance what is unique about or typical of your company. As growth is your objective, ideally the USP of your company or product is integrated in the slogan. An effective slogan will convey your message to a variety of audiences, from investors to customers and suppliers to job applicants. But how should the slogan run? A slogan that captivates one person may strike the next person as stupid. Creativity is key, but a couple of rules of thumb should be taken into account. Here they are:

- do you really want a slogan? A bad one can do more harm than good to the image you want to project
- many good slogans are miniature vision statements, expressing why your company is special and how you intend to keep it that way
- make the slogan short and simple
- exaggeration is usually counter-productive. Avoid it
- do not 'shout': a subtle, original text is far more highly appreciated
- a slogan with a double or even triple meaning can easily be confusing
- search for original words and avoid clichés like quality, service, the best, etc
- test your slogan on other people. Ask them what they think about the sentence you have just composed
- at their best, slogans activate an emotion or stimulate people's imagination.

A brief, catchy slogan can be placed in advertisements, posters, brochures, business cards and even on constant reminders like uniforms, corporate cars and stationery.

1.3 Corporate image and external factors

Establishing and maintaining a positive image is crucial for companies in developing (or less-industrialised) countries aiming to access the EU markets. However, in doing so, you will soon find that your success depends not only on your own efforts but also on those of your fellow countrymen, producers' associations, trade promotion bodies and the government at large. All of these external factors have an influence on your company's image.

Reversely, your company or sector image can also influence the image of your country – either positively or negatively! For instance, if the ICT sector in a particular country has a good reputation, this will have a positive influence on the entire trade and industry, regardless of whether or not an active image campaign is operational. A country that has acquired a negative image due to child labour in a particular sector will feel the repercussions for individual enterprises or even whole sectors, regardless of whether or not they have anything to do with the problem.

In other words, your company's positive corporate image and the image of your country or sector are interrelated. Because of this, we will briefly look at the responsibility of umbrella organisations involved in promoting trade, the so-called Business Support Organisations (BSOs). One of their major tasks is to present their country and/or sector as a source of opportunities.

An integrated approach

The fundamentals need to be in order if you are striving for a positive image. Your country's business and international trade environment should be well developed and able to stand up to serious criteria in an integrated way.

Important basic criteria include:

- a good physical infrastructure
- a favourable investment climate
- a supportive attitude by the service sector
- good credit accessibility
- political stability and security
- a facilitating role by the government
- minimal bureaucracy.

Consistency and the involvement and commitment of BSOs, including embassies and overseas trade offices, are of the utmost importance.

1.3.1 Cultural differences and international business

Neglect of cultural differences is an important cause of failure in international business.

The assumptions you make and the business style you adopt are largely shaped by your cultural beliefs and values. Obviously, the same applies for your customers. Differing beliefs, values and styles can form a serious business obstacle, which is why understanding and managing cultural differences is so important – especially if creating credibility in your target markets requires you to establish personal relationships. 'Adapt and adopt' are key words in international business.

"Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best, and often a disaster."

(Source: Prof. Geert Hofstede, Emeritus Professor, Maastricht University)

Prof. Geert Hofstede conducted perhaps the most comprehensive study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. His research gives insights into other cultures so that you can be more effective when interacting with people belonging to those cultures. If you understand and apply it properly, this information will reduce frustration, anxiety and concern. Most importantly, you will gain the 'edge of understanding' that leads to better results.

To prepare yourself for cross-cultural business, use the following websites:

- Compare your home culture with your host culture at:
http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php
- Find out about Country Business Etiquette at: <http://www.cyborlink.com>
- Download the CBI's export manual 'Exporting to the EU' at:
<http://www.cbi.eu/marketinfo>

2

Printed image carriers

In chapter 1, we looked at the concepts corporate identity and corporate image, the importance of a positive corporate image and how that image can be influenced. In chapters 2, 3 and 4 we will examine the carriers you can use to convey your identity to business relations. They are partly responsible for the image others will have of your company.

We will distinguish between printed carriers, digital carriers and personal carriers. Printed carriers and, increasingly, electronic carriers are the main carriers used for corporate identity. Other means of communication can highlight important differences, but printed matter – due to its visual nature – creates wide opportunities in terms of quality and continuity. In the rest of this chapter you will find detailed practical guidelines for the most broadly used forms of printed matter.

'Your Image Builder' does not pretend to give an exhaustive description of all available carriers. It is based on the primary needs of its target group: small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) exporting to the EU market.

2.1 Letter paper, envelopes and business cards

There are as many wishes as there are people. Does that sound familiar? It certainly applies to the design and lay-out of letter paper, envelopes and business cards. And although design and lay-out are highly subjective, there are certain characteristics you should bear in mind if you wish to make a professional impression on the people receiving your correspondence, especially in business-to-business (B2B) communication with contacts in the EU. See the suggestions below.

2.1.1 Letter paper

- Regarding the size of your letter paper, use the A4 format (21 x 29.7 cm).
- The paper quality should be at least 80 grams, with a high degree of whiteness or, if you wish, a light colour.
- Your logo, printed lightly as a background to the text, can make a creative impression, but overdoing it can do more harm than good.
- Always place your logo or company name in one and the same spot. The right-hand upper corner is a good option, because that part of your letter first attracts the eye in a pile of papers or a file.
- Printing your name, address and other details in the upper part of the letter, under your logo or company name, gives you flexibility in using the rest of the page's space.
- A logo or company name on the left-hand side determines the left-hand margin for the text and reduces your scope for deviation.
- Leave standard spaces for the margins and between the address, date and opening.
- Continuation sheets for letters start on the upper left-hand corner with a repetition of a few details, such as the date, reference and subject.
- You have to realise that the font you use will influence the impression your letter makes on the reader: for instance, it may come across as friendly, businesslike or reliable. Choose a font that supports the image you have in mind.
- Use as few variations in fonts and font sizes as possible in one and the same letter.
- Fonts that are too lightly coloured are difficult to read, especially if the letter is sent as a fax.



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Corporate Identity Street 123
4567 City
Country
Phone +12-1234 56 78 90
Fax +12-1234 56 78 91
e-mail newflower@identity.com
www.newflower.com
Bank account nr. 000.0000.00
Chamber of Commerce nr. 00000000

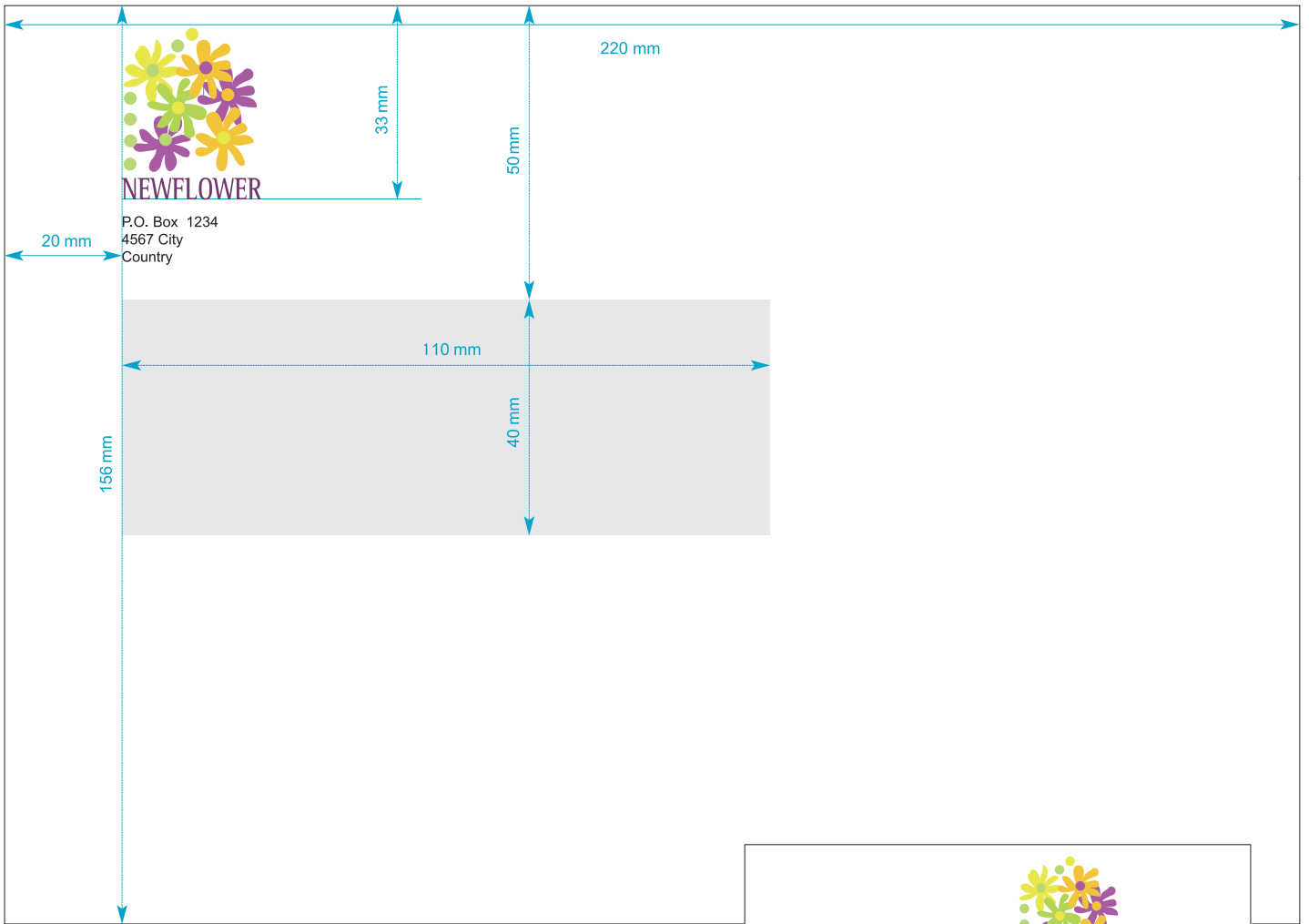
50 mm

210 mm

155 mm

25 mm

297 mm



Typography examples

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890(#!±§)

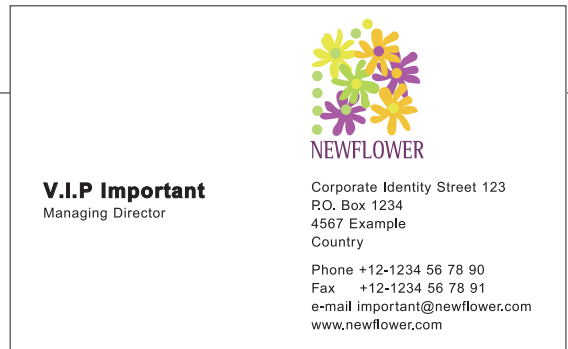
ARIAL Condensed

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890(#!±§)

ARIAL Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ&
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890(#!±§)

ARIAL Bold



- Always begin with the addressee, date and opening words on the left-hand side of the letter. Switching between left and right alignment creates a 'restless' impression and causes confusion.
- Maintain a left-hand margin of at least 2 cm. The right-hand margin can vary.

2.1.2 Envelopes

- Use white envelopes, preferably, or envelopes with the same colour as your letter paper, if it is not white.
- An envelope with a window makes a neat impression and has the further advantage that the address only needs to be typed once (on the actual letter).
- The placing of the window on the left-hand side is a consequence of the place where the addressee's details are typed in the letter.
- Placing your logo, name and address above the window is a good choice.
- With an A5 format envelope, folding your A4 letter once will suffice, whereas narrower envelopes require more folding.

2.1.3 Business cards

- The logo, font and colours should tally with those of your letter paper.
- All vital details should be on the front of your card. Complementary information can be printed on the reverse side.
- The size should not be larger than 9 x 5.5 cm, or the size of a credit card, 8.5 x 5.4 cm.
- Deviating formats, like folded or vertically printed business cards, are striking but can be a nuisance when it comes to filing.
- Be aware that cards covered with a plastic film cannot be used to make notes on.
- Glossy cards or cards with silver or gold are difficult to copy or fax.



Good



Reasonable



Bad

Using the two sides of your business card for different languages may leave little space for making notes, but can make a very professional and contact-friendly impression. For doing business in the EU, using English as second language on your business card will prove suitable in most cases.

2.2 The corporate brochure

A brochure is a booklet folded once to a particular size and consisting of between 4 and 24 pages; it is fixed together by staples or any other binding material.

The corporate brochure is a must-have in promotional kits. It strongly reflects your company's identity, explaining in clear terms your company's organisation, strategy, status, staff qualifications, customer benefits, products, services and processes.

It provides detailed information in a way that is both efficient and attractive and it can be distributed at practically any time and on any occasion as a hand-out or an annex to other material, such as mailing letters. It can also be used by third parties, such as your distributors.

2.2.1 The creative strategy

A great brochure can be a great sales tool. However, a great corporate brochure is not always easy to produce. Creativity is essential in producing an attractive brochure that encourages target readers to study and absorb its contents. You will need a creative strategy to provide the production team with the right input for visualising the document. Artistry should be given high priority, both in writing the body text as well as in creating the lay-out, photos/illustrations and other visual elements.

The colours of your corporate brochure should be attractive and professionally matched. In order to obtain the required results, you will have to set up strategic briefings to provide text writers, art directors and printers with proper instructions. It is vital that you have a clear idea of the promotional objectives of the brochure from the early beginnings of production. You have to know what you will be using the brochure for: introducing your company as a quality provider, as a well-established company, emphasizing your commitment to service, creating awareness among decision makers, maintaining existing relationships, obtaining orders or response, or influencing your image.

<p>Briefings include the following topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corporate image aimed at • company's strategy and organisation • promotional objectives • properties of its products and services • target groups and 'tone of voice' • selection of distribution media • available budget

2.2.2 Limitations

You will face certain limitations in producing a corporate brochure. For one, it will have to be in line with your the company's corporate style – the set of rules you have set up for all forms of publication in order to manage your identity consistently.

Another limitation is that your customers will in general spend very little time reading your brochure.

Your brochure's lifespan is also a limitation. Most corporate brochures are out-dated within about two years due to changing policies or product lines, production processes or sometimes corporate styles. At the same time, production can be time-consuming and overseas shipping costly. Production costs include the development of the concept, artwork, copy writing, printing and distribution.

*corporate brochures:
the heart of your
identity, but with a
limited lifespan*

Lack of funds can form another limiting factor. However, you should never let this result in a cheap-looking brochure. No brochure is better than a shabby brochure; instead, you might produce cheaper material. Selective distribution will also help reduce the cost. For instance, at trade fairs you may decide to hand out less expensive leaflets and to reserve the brochures for the more promising contacts.

2.2.3 Design guidelines

Format

There are no strict rules as to the size of a brochure. However, administrative archiving systems in the EU are based on the same standard: the German DIN A4 format (21x29.7 cm). Printed matter of deviating dimensions can therefore cause annoyance. The most common and accepted format used for brochures is a folded A3 (2x A4), containing 4 pages of information.

If for particular reasons you insist on another size, the standard size A5 (0.5x A4) or any other size may be chosen. However, sizes smaller than A4 may trigger unpleasant questions like: "Doesn't this company have enough information or funds for a bigger brochure?" Unless the design, material and print used in a small brochure are of excellent quality and evoke a positive image, an A3 format folded to A4 is strongly advisable.

Material and print

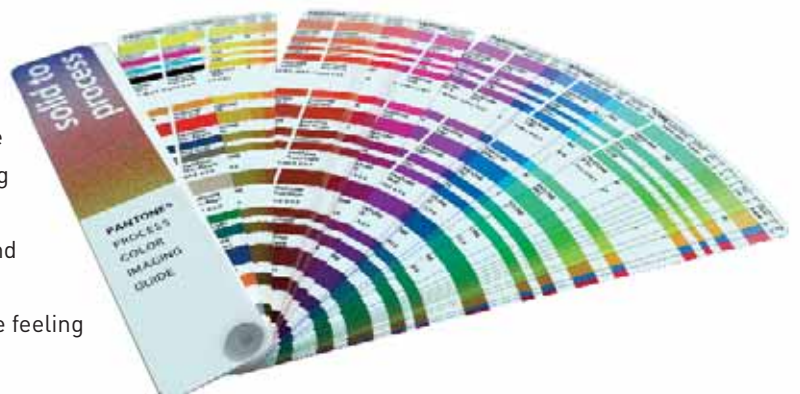
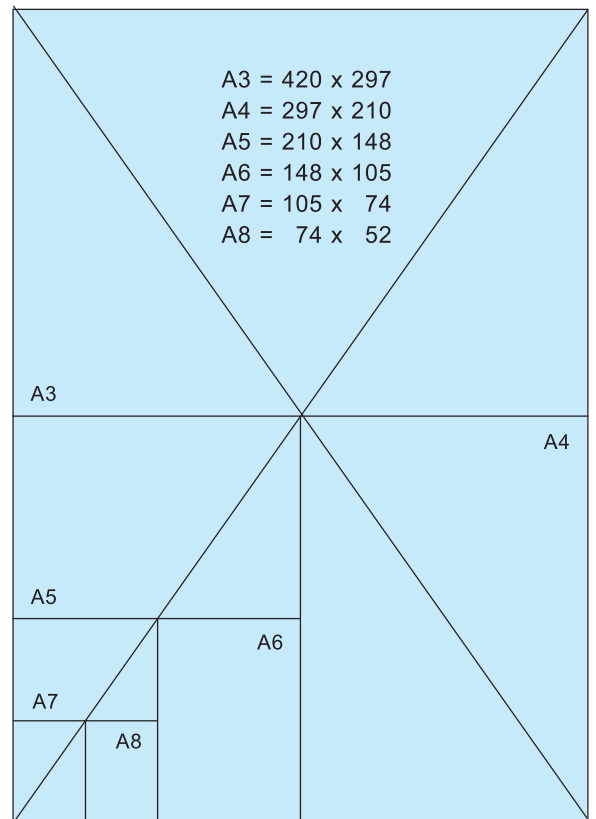
If you present yourself as a (competitive) cost leader, glossy paper and fancy art work are not the way to convey your message. However, if your message is 'quality', the material and print should radiate quality, too. A glossy appearance, therefore, may or may not be appropriate. The paper weight should be at least 150 grams/sq.m.; the front and back page can be thicker than the inside pages.

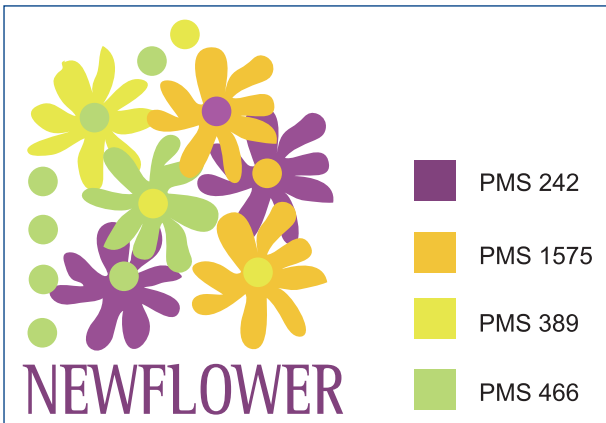
Colours

Stick consistently to the colours of your corporate style. In any case, limit the number of colours and do not use different colours for headings and text.

Your brochure colours should match your corporate or product colours. In industrial brochures bright colours are not common and may leave an amateurish impression. In choosing the main colour or supporting colours for your corporate style, remember that colours have the following associations in the EU:

- green is associated with nature and health and evokes an environmental image
- yellow and orange give a warm, sunny, festive feeling





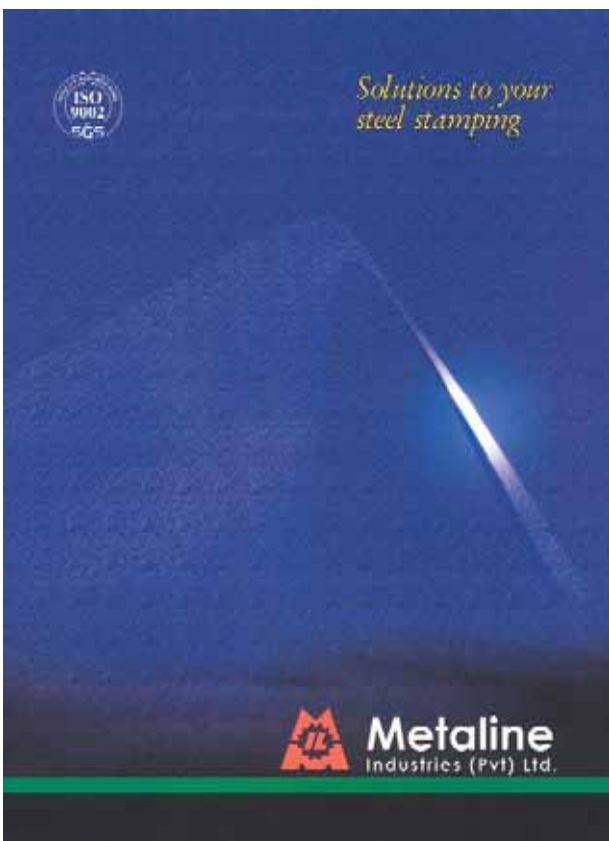
- blue gives a cool, spacious impression and enhances the image of technology, reliability and safety
- red is associated with warmth, stimulation and activity. Red used on large surfaces, may suggest a certain degree of aggression however
- grey shades may reinforce the image of solidity and quality
- black can successfully be applied in sectors like fashion and interior design, as it can radiate quality and exclusivity. Shades of black used in combination with a striking or contrasting colour can create a high-powered impact.

Our perception of colours is subjective. It differs from culture to culture. Colour can be used to express emotion, superstition or other things you might not expect. We strongly suggest you refrain from tapping into those motives when choosing colours for brochures and other commercial printed matter. Base your colour decisions on a combination of functionality and creativity, in line with the nature of the product and the image desired.

The front page

This is the page that shows your company name, logo, the main application of your product and your positioning message, or unique selling proposition, integrated in a slogan. As far as appropriate, you can also print a logo referring to an (internationally recognised) quality management certificate or eco label here, so as to create

immediate recognition and build trust. Remember that a brochure is seldomly read from beginning to end. The front page is of crucial importance in establishing an image, communicating added value and triggering the reader to spend more time on the brochure and to turn the page.



By courtesy of Wilthink BV, www.wilnest.eu
Developed by Ten Design

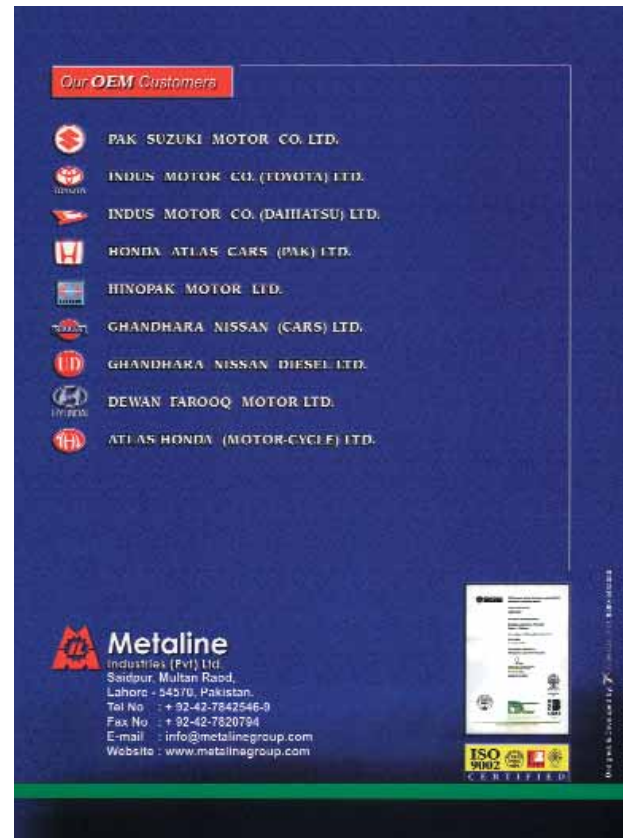
One of the biggest and most common mistakes is focussing on information instead of persuasion. Remember that persuasion starts on the front page.

The back page

This page is used for testimonials (from clients or institutes) or references, and contact details. Try to organise the printed area for the contact details in such a way that a sticker can easily be put over the printed area without comprising the quality of the brochure, in case of changes in the address or numbers. Do not mention the address or communication numbers of your plant or factory if they are located elsewhere, as this may confuse or even irritate potential customers.



By courtesy of Wilthink BV, www.wilnest.eu
Developed by Ten Design



The inside pages

The most important thing about your company and products is not your company and your products, it is how these relate to your customers. Look at your text from the point of view of the potential buyer and replace 'we' by 'you'. Provide information that answers his or her key question, "What's in it for me?"

You will not convince or persuade readers by stating facts, features and technical points. Get your reader interested by talking about his or her needs. Sell benefits rather than features. Earn readership and credibility. Give relevant company information only. Your brochure should not be a 'boring' history book about the company's past, but contain current and relevant data (mission, organisational structure, market positions, export experience, production process, quality control, relevant internationally recognised certificates etc.).

your brochure text should start with your target reader: build rapport first and then sell

Explicitly state your line of business and do not expect readers to have the same background as you have. Give concise and relevant information. Do not forget there are more buyers outside your sector than within it.

Clearly mention the products you manufacture or export and explain your activities in such a way that they can be easily understood by readers who are not familiar with them. Arouse their interest.

Refrain from excessive expressions of pride. Instead, compose your text with the desires and needs of the target reader in mind. Refrain from spiritual references and 'woolly' texts as well. For instance, avoid phrases such as "We are the leading manufacturer" (as you are probably not).

Obviously, the brochure must contain information about your product assortment or services. Remember, however, that you can best sell the features of your products or services through their benefits. Use loose-leaf inserts like product data sheets (which often change) on the right-hand side of your brochure.

Use headings for each paragraph so that readers can easily find specific information. Avoid photographs or a raster as a background for the text as this will make reading more difficult.

how do people read brochures? They don't, they scan. So make it easy for readers to visually scan your brochure

The bird house that sells itself

Wilnest

At trade shows in the recent past it was already a great success. And now it is actually available. Wilnest. The bird house that has so many features that you hardly have to make any effort to sell it. It almost sells itself.

- **Can be used the whole year round**
By mounting the house under the roof the other way around, you can change the Wilnest in an instant from a nesting box to a feeding box. So Wilnest can be used in any season.
- **Robust and durable**
The bird house has a robust plastic construction that will not discolour for at least 18 years.
- **Interchangeable entrance holes**
Users can decide for themselves what kinds of bird will nest in their Wilnest.
- **Well insulated**
Thanks to the bird house's double-walled construction the conditions inside are always optimal.
- **No problems from moisture**
A well designed ventilation system prevents condensation and excess moisture is drained.
- **Well sheltered**
The overhanging roof prevents the ingress of light and rain.

The many Unique Selling Points of Wilnest

The Wilnest bird house is the product of extensive research in which the opinion of 'fowlers' was also given special attention. As a result of this thorough approach, Wilnest offers a unique combination of advantageous features. So this bird house is truly one of a kind.

A home for every bird!

Exchangeable entry hole suitable for many bird species
Transparent cover, so watch without disturbing
Screened ventilation
Easily removed house module
Hide eave against sun and rain
All-plastic for durability and easy cleaning
Available in 3 colour schemes
Entirely hollow-walled for good insulation
Round underside with drainage

By courtesy of Wilthink BV, www.wilnest.eu
Developed by Ten Design

20 years of experience

Company Profile

The Company was established in 1983, with precision machining and proto work facility providing Hi-Tech equipment and sheetmetal components to OEMs as Tier 1 supplier and other engineering sections of the Country. Through the dedication and expertise of our work force, the company soon earned a reputation for superb quality goods and reliable services. Since 1989 all renowned OEMs have continuously accredited our efforts by award of Certificates of Excellence.

We can develop and produce components within available resources strictly according to your design/drawings and specifications.

Research and Development

Our sister company M/s Metaline Engineering Company was established in 1989, it produces high quality precision tooling for the development of intricate dies & moulds required for our specialty products and automobile sector to meet the customers' expectations for stringent quality.

These state of the art facilities and growing expertise of both Metaline Industries (Pvt) Ltd. and Metaline Engineering Co. provide our group with the capability to meet our client's challenging demands. At the same time they also provide valuable in-house resources for the speedy production of accurate toolings.

By adding CNC Wire-cut, LDM and CDM machine to our tool room, it has become possible for us to manufacture and maintain large size of tooling. This unit thus offers all facilities under one roof, we are in a position to undertake manufacturing of all sizeable components like fuel tanks, Oil Pans, Body Panels and Sub Assemblies.

Today, we at Metaline provide a wide spectrum of engineering services of consultation, designing, development and production of top grade equipment.

Restrict the number of fonts and do not use artistic fonts other than that in your corporate logo. Use regular and common fonts for large texts. A variegated collection of fonts creates a restless impression.

Illustrations

Each and every illustration in your brochure should be appropriate and of top quality (sharply focused, high contrast). It should directly visualise its purpose: product assortment, product application or product benefit and production facility.

Remember, in the EU it is not important to present a gallery of the Board of Directors. Save the precious space in the brochure for illustrations that will attract and persuade.

Have photos made by a professional photographer. Avoid retouches. Compose captions for every picture. Do not mix photos with completely different backgrounds or lighting, or photos from different ages. And certainly do not mix photographs with graphics. Use close-ups as much as you can.

2.2.4 Your Corporate Brochure Quick Scan

Use the 'Corporate Brochure Quick Scan' to assess the quality and effectiveness of your own brochure or your brochure text.

The more your findings score on the right side of the scales, the more effective your brochure is.

Of course, assessing your own brochure or brochure text requires you to step away from what you yourself know about your company and products. You must become as objective a target reader as you possibly can. Good luck!

Corporate brochure Quick Scan		
Front Page (FP) Criteria	Findings	Improvements
FP shows identity: our company name + logo	[] No [] Yes	
FP contains a slogan/tagline	[] No [] Yes	
• from the slogan/tagline it is easy to understand what business our company is in	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the tagline positions our company	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the slogan/tagline gives a major benefit, our USP or provokes thought	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the tagline appeals to our target reader	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
FP makes a professional impression		
• it is visually appealing	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• there is no overkill of texts or images	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
FP makes the reader want to read more and turn the page	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	

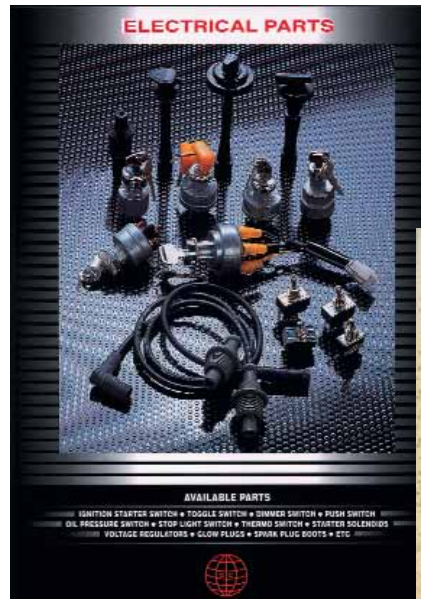
Corporate brochure Quick Scan		
Back Page (BP)		
Criteria	Findings	Improvements
BP shows our contact details	[] No [] Yes	
Contact details are complete, current and correct	[] No [] Yes	
BP does not provide important commercial info for the target reader	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
BP adds to confidence building		
• it gives an oversight of reputable partners or customers	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• it gives testimonials of reputable partners or customers	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
BP makes a professional impression	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
Inside Pages (IP)		
Criteria	Findings	Improvements
IP written with the reader in mind		
• the copy begins with the customers, not with our company or products. It builds rapport first and then it sells	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the copy relates to or intrigues the reader: the reader recognises himself in it	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the copy talks about readers' needs	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the tone is personal (reader = addressed by 'YOU')	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
Product/service description		
• the copy sells benefits, not features	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• there is no overkill of technical information	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
Readability and credibility		
• the reader can easily find what he wants	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• headlines are used and used in a consistent way	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the headlines say: "Pay attention to me!"	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the overall content and style is consistent	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the content, images and tone establish credibility	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the copy is visually appealing	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• all content merits readership	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the pictures used are relevant, of good quality and have captions	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
Company description		
• the company description is short and concise	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the company description makes the reader feel it is smart to choose the company	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
• the copy explains how the company works	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	
Action		
• the reader is asked to undertake (a certain) action	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Agree	

2.3 Product sheets

Product sheets are usually one-page formats which provide more detailed information on specific products. They can be distributed as loose leaflets and as inserts in company brochures and can be replaced whenever required. As they do not necessarily have the glossy appearance of corporate brochures, they tend to be less expensive. They can be used as hand-outs at trade fairs, for instance. Product sheets are used most in the actual sales process.

Another advantage of product sheets is that most companies nowadays can easily produce them with a computer and a (colour) printer. Desktop production reduces costs even more, while making adaptation and updating easier, too. The golden rule here, too, is to appeal to the target readers.

Do not forget to print your company name and logo as well as contact details on your product sheets. For identity building purposes and for positioning you may also add your corporate slogan or a product slogan. The same applies to the next carrier, product catalogues.



2.4 Product catalogues

Product catalogues are useful if you need to display a large range or number of products. Product descriptions are accompanied by photos or drawings. Product catalogues appear in all sorts of varieties and sizes. In the first place, they are aimed at promoting direct sales. Moreover, a product catalogue can be used for strengthening your company's image. A primary condition is that the photo material, in particular, is professionally managed. A sloppy catalogue does more harm than good and should never be allowed to appear.

Crucial catalogue information includes product code numbers, specifications of materials used, dimensions and varieties. Disadvantages of printed product catalogues are that they are expensive (as are the postage rates involved in shipping them) and can be rapidly outdated. You may find producing a CD-ROM an attractive and flexible alternative.



2.5 Writing effective business letters

Without presuming to present the perfect, one-and-only business letter, we will nevertheless provide some hints on contents and cosmetics in this paragraph.

2.5.1 Contents

Start your letter with the main message. Do not waste too much time on introductions. In the best case, you only get a few seconds to draw someone's attention and to motivate him or her to read on. Give the reason for or the background of your message. Tell the reader why you are approaching him or her.

Next, elaborate on the key message: give details, precise information, arguments, and, if applicable, the actions you intend to take.

Do not leave an open ending by saying things like, "We look forward to your reaction" but finish with a 'closed' statement: "We will phone you next Friday (give the date) to discuss your feedback on this proposal".

2.5.2 Cosmetics

A letter should make an impeccable impression. It should be neat, without typing errors. Even to this day, business letters are only very occasionally written by hand. Having said that, a brief, hand-written note to an existing business relation can be functional in some cases.

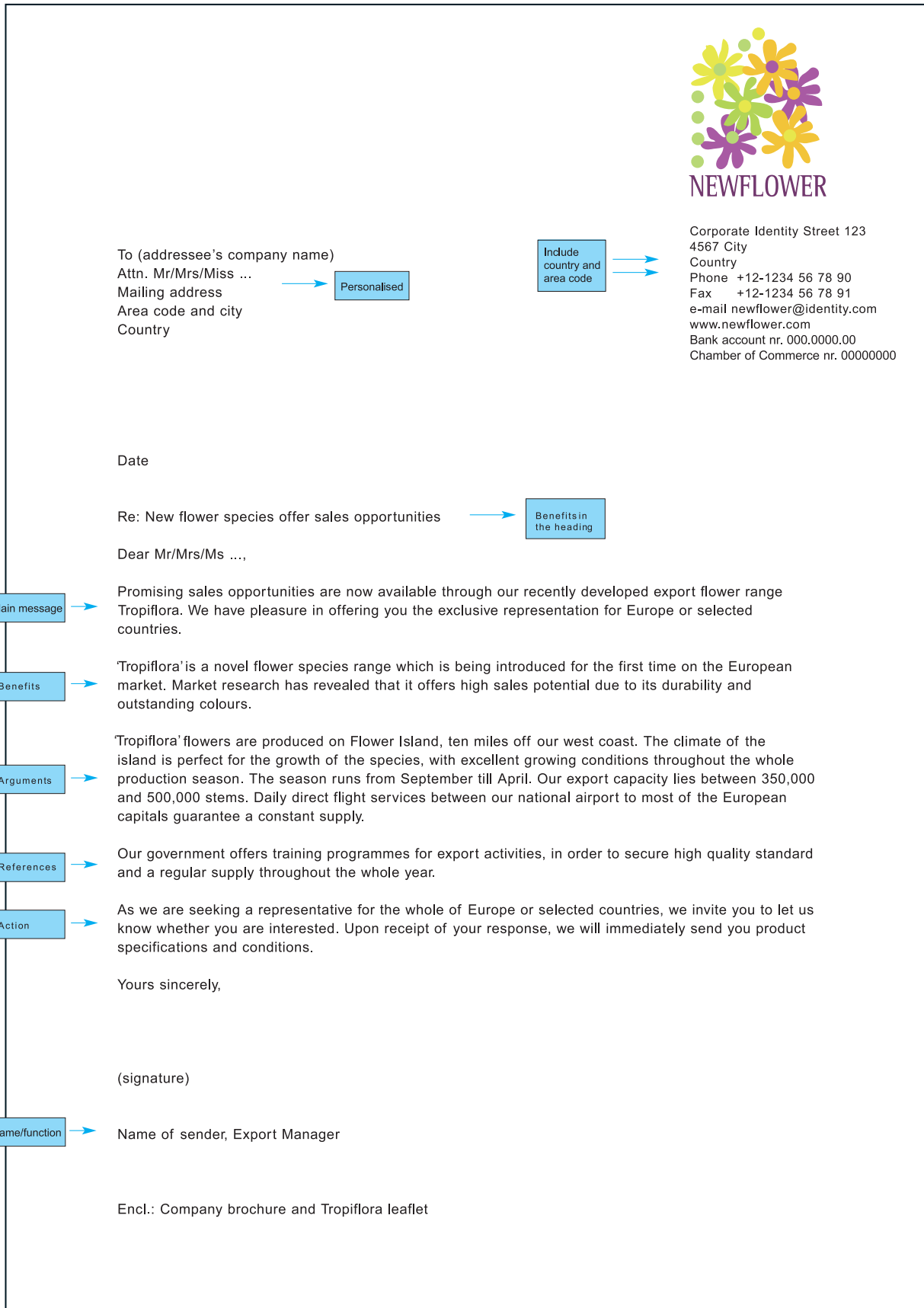
Its effect can be to emphasise the personal and relaxed relationship between the two parties. However, serious, professional business correspondence is in type writing.

Here are some hints for writing an effective business letter:

- use good quality, clear-white paper
- personalise the letter and preferably address it to an individual, along with his or her correct title
- double-check both the address and addressee
- pack the whole message preferably onto one A4-size page, eliminating waste information
- spell out the benefit to the recipient in the heading of an introductory letter or offer of a service/product (the reason he or she should do business with you, your added value, your unique selling proposition)
- use short sentences (max 15 words) and paragraphs
- avoid overusing the words 'I' or 'we' in your letter
- names and personal words will make your message more active and lively
- do not exaggerate and avoid attempts to be humorous
- do not forget to state your name and function, and hand-sign with a firm signature
- consider sending a follow-up or reminder letter after four weeks
- follow-up by telephone within a week.

the most important criteria for a business person to pay attention to your letter is: "What is in it for me? Can I benefit from this?"

How to write a business letter (an example)



How NOT to write a business letter (an example)



To (addressee's company name)
Attn. Mr/Mrs/Miss ...
Mailing address
Area code and city
Country

Corporate Identity Street 123
4567 City
Country
Phone +12-1234 56 78 90
Fax +12-1234 56 78 91
e-mail newflower@identity.com
www.newflower.com
Bank account nr. 000.0000.00
Chamber of Commerce nr. 00000000

Date

Dear Sirs,

We owe your esteemed address to the courtesy of the British-Macandian Chamber of Commerce in Otagua. We produce different products with high export potential. Our basic product is in fact the flower called Tropiflora which is produced on Flower Island, near the Macandian coast. The history of this flower is unknown. For centuries the inhabitants of the island lived among the massive flower fields. The climate of Flower Island is great, with average warm temperatures, sun and healthy soil.

Only recently Flower Island has begun to improve its economy, bringing it up to a modern, contemporary standard in a professional way. Our government is very much in favour of supporting export activities.

Not only the flower itself seems to be an interesting export product. Also the seeds have special value. The leaves contain ingredients which may be used for medical purposes. And then there is another, quite different application. The flower makes wonderful paint, which can be used both for artistic purposes and for dyeing textile materials.

Should you wish to know more about 'Tropiflora', we invite you to visit our website www.tropiflora.mc.

With kind regards,

Name of sender

2.6 Direct mail with results

Direct mail (DM) involves mailing letters (with enclosures, such as brochures, product sheets and even corporate gifts or small samples), directly to members of your target audience. DM can be considered as a first step in a promotion scheme. Many people criticise DM as being an ineffective tool, yet it is the most widely used promotional instrument. There are reasons for both points of view. Critics will tell you that the response rate to direct mail is very low. In actual fact, it differs per sector; in general, you can say that the response rate to direct mailings is around, or even below, one percent. That is not an encouraging figure, so why is it that so many companies still use DM?



One of the reasons is that it is a relatively cheap way of promoting a company and its products or services. Another reason is that companies accept the low response rate and send out such large volumes of promotional letters that they will eventually end up with an acceptable number of business leads. Yet another reason is that the response rate can be increased by applying some rules and tricks.

2.6.1 Customising your letter

The key to effectiveness here is selectivity and personalisation. The more specific or customised your mailing, the higher the rate of success. So narrow down the number of recipients, selecting only those which you have scrutinised. Do not just collect names and addresses from business directories, but learn more about those companies by visiting their websites or browsing through their brochures. That way, you will be able to make a customised proposal. The key to success is in knowing your potential customers and their needs.

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast • flexible • inexpensive • small enclosures 	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • target identification • one-way communication • no direct feedback • low response rate <p><i>Use DM in a selective way, personalised, tailored to the needs of your target, as an invitation to events and for follow-up activities</i></p>	<p>Direct mail</p>
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2.6.2 A 'trigger' will help

Apart from customising your mailings, you also have to be creative. Due to the enormous flow of direct mail that companies receive, a lot of mailings end up in the waste bin without the envelope ever having been opened. A so-called 'trigger' can be of great help in persuading receivers to at least open the envelope. No one has the will power to throw away an envelope unopened if they can feel it contains a small object, for instance: a ballpoint pen or something related to the product or service you are offering. You may also choose something more creative, such as a postcard that makes a noise if you squeeze it.

It goes without saying that the rules for effective business letters also apply to direct mail letters.

2.7 Fax messages


In terms of contents, there is no difference between letters and faxes. Basically, every letter can be sent by fax. However, sending the original letter by post is preferable for correspondence of a more formal nature (a contract requiring an original signature, for instance): it suggests a certain standing or position. If you are in a hurry, send the letter and/or document by fax, adding that the original is on the way by post.

2.7.1 Lay-out of a fax message

As far as the lay-out of a fax message is concerned, there are a few points of attention regarding clarity and impact:

- at the top of the sheet of paper, write the words FAX MESSAGE
- as the text of a fax is always more difficult to read than a letter by post, sure you use a font of at least 11 points in size
- make sure the address details of the sender are legible – all too often, they are printed in a small, light font
- be aware that some colours (logos, print) will not come through clearly, particularly light colours such as yellow, pink, et cetera
- where official documents are concerned, such as tenders/proposals, it is quite possible that the signature will not be accepted as legitimate and you will have to send the original(s) by post
- programme the settings of your fax machine to leave your company name, the date on which the fax has been sent and your own fax number as a heading on the fax of the recipient.

How to structure your fax heading (an example)

<p>FAX MESSAGE</p> <p>To : Attn : Mr/Mrs/Miss... (addressee's name) Fax nr. : +01-23-4567890 From : Mr/Mrs/Miss...(sender's name) Date : dd/mm/yyyy</p> <p>Subject: (your reference number or subject description)</p> <p>Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms (surname)</p>	 <p>NEWFLOWER <i>colouring your business</i></p> <p>Corporate Identity Street 123 4567 City Country Phone +12-1234 56 78 90 Fax +12-1234 56 78 91 e-mail newflower@identity.com www.newflower.com</p>
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2.8 Press releases that will enhance your image

The regular issuing of press releases constitutes an important element of your image-building campaign. If it is published, your message will be viewed as objective information, as it appears to have been written by a third party, i.e. by the editor of the publication.

Press media can help you reach a large audience: more people with one message. The trade press is a particularly important link between you and a larger audience. Your press release is one of the main tools for informing editors and convincing them of the importance of the article for their readers.

If your article is published in a respectable journal or trade magazine, it will have a major positive effect on your image. Another major advantage lies in the costs, as placing an article is free and gives you and your product/service 'free publicity'.

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sector coverage • free of charge • strong impact • small enclosures 	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dependent on editor • not in control of contents • no direct feedback • long advanced timing <p><i>In trade magazines, daily papers, exhibition bulletins, through proper press releases and well-prepared interviews</i></p>	<p>Free publicity</p>
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All publications rely to a greater or lesser extent on press releases. However, a vast amount of the press releases received by editors is thrown away without being used. So how do you deal with the press?

First and foremost, a press release should contain NEWS. Do not write your press release with your target business audience in mind, but with the editor in mind. The editor is not interested in buying your products or services, he is interested in publishing news. Too many press releases are sent out containing little news or none at all. They invariably end up in the editor's rubbish bin. In writing a press release, make sure you meet the editor's need for news.

Editors deciding on which articles to publish face several problems: CONTENTS, TIMING, FORMAT, PICTURES. Bearing that general marketing rule in mind – "Solve the other person's problems and you are in business" – here are some ideas and hints for catching an editor's attention and getting your message published.

When

- be sure you are really communicating something new, or announcing an important upcoming event
- peg your story on some current issue
- make sure your story is inherently interesting to readers
- strictly observe the deadline for receipt by the editor (trade magazines: 8 weeks in advance).

Contents

- be factual and realistic, avoid generalities and superlatives
- identify the subject and give the gist of the story in a brief headline
- summarise, giving all the vital elements in the first paragraph
- restrict the use of quotes
- finish with a special pay-off line.

Format

- organise your information in a journalistic style: headline, opening paragraph, body and closing paragraph
- the opening paragraph should explain who, what, where, why, when and how
- the opening paragraph should also contain a 'hook' or 'catch': the one thing that will make your readers interested in reading more
- the 'hook' is not a sales argument, but a factual statement
- apply the inverted pyramid strategy for the body text: put most important information and quotes first, so that the editor can edit from the bottom up without losing critical information
- keep the release short, preferably one A4 page (400 – 500 words)
- use the language of the country or English
- use short sentences
- KISS (keep it short and simple)
- use lead 1½ and broad marginal lines
- enclose/attach pictures or illustrations, complete with captions
- make sure your illustrations provide additional information
- include your contact details for the editor.

Here are some general issues the European press is interested in:

- safe and environment-friendly production
- fair labour conditions and wages
- absence of child labour
- stable political situation, democracy.

Editors prefer to receive press releases in a digital format, for instance by e-mail so that they can easily re-write, adapt and/or pass the text on to other departments.

Free publicity don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• don't tell editors what they should write• don't try to impress them with success stories• don't use too much or difficult figures• don't try to 'buy' a journalist• don't ask them to publish the article

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date July, 2007

Main headline **ALTERNATIVES TO CAVIAR AND FOIE GRAS INTRODUCED AT INTRAFOD 2007**

Secondary headline **International top chef Garden Moresay backs up Macandia’s first national entry on the European market, serving dishes prepared with delicacies from the country.**

Hook Otagua, Macandia – Every cook will agree that the key to serving an excellent dish lies in using the right ingredients. That, together with the booming appetite for excellent meals, is why both professional and home cooks are constantly on the look-out for culinary novelties – the former to stay ahead of competition, the latter perhaps just to put on a special evening for some friends.

Who, what, where, when, why From October 7 – 11, the international foods and beverages trade fair Intrafood '07 in Paris (France), will be the platform from which the Republic of Macandia, will - for the first time ever - present its national culinary offer to the European hospitality and retail market. The decision to participate in Intrafood was not taken overnight and seems to include all the ingredients for success.

Body ref. main headline by means of quote “We started preparations for the group participation more than sixteen months in advance”, says John Ofralo, managing director of EXPROMA, the trade promotion office coordinating Macandia’s participation. “Studies showed substantial demand for the products we offer. Direct contacts with caterers and retailers confirmed that and showed us where we needed to improve or change. For Intrafood we have now selected 8 food producers from our country, all qualifying for exports to Europe. They can stand the test in every field: labeling, traceability, quality control and certification. But what may be of higher importance, is that each of them offers something unique to the European market. From alternatives to Caviar and Foie Gras to instant soups rich in vitamins A, C and D”.

Body ref. secondary headline by means of text World-famous top chef Garden Moresay, who has Macandian dishes on the menu in all of his five restaurants on the European continent, will actively support the Macandian participation. Each day of the exhibition he and his team will prepare and serve specialty bites and dishes exclusively prepared from the products of the participants in the pavilion. Moreover, he will participate in the Trends Events Competition at the fair with a range of Macandian novelty light products.

Closing paragraph The Macandian stand is located in Hall 3, stand C040. For detailed information contact EXPROMA, Mr. Alu Afralli or visit www.exproma.com/press/intrafood2007. From this website detailed information can be obtained about the participation: a.o. special events agenda, participants’ company and product information, digital press kit and photo stock.

Contact: Phone: 00-374-23-150688
 Mr. Alu Afralli Fax: 00-374-23-150689
 Chief PR & Press Officer Email: press@exproma.com
 EXPROMA www.exproma.com

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July, 2007

MACANDIA GOES ABROAD

Otagua, Macandia – Macandia, is proud to inform you that it will participate in Intrafood 2007, which will take place from October 7 – 11 in Paris, France. The beautiful Pacific island near the coast of Otaba which regained independence 15 years ago produces agricultural and horticultural top quality products and is growing very rapidly in its region.

At Intrafood 2007 the Macandian stand will group the island's ten best food producers, all of them eager to export to Europe. Excellent wines will be on offer as well as the most exquisite fine food products. The Macandian stand with its unique business opportunities really is something you should visit to see for yourself.

The ten exporters on our stand are:

- Frutomare: the best fresh tuna and shrimp salads
- Cocanota: a perfect coconut milk mix for cocktail drinks
- Olivia Oils: the most prominent producer of refined edible palm oils
- Aunty Cantata: highly nutritious cream soups
- Hammona Exquise Foods: the finest cured and smoked hams
- Alter Bayer: leading producer of dried game and poultry sausages
- Capistrano: producer of exquisite fish delicacies
- Il Bergeron: famous cottage made goat cheeses
- Diaryo Desserts: long life yoghurt puddings
- Antigua Estati: world class wines

EXPROMA, the Macandian trade promotion office, is in charge of coordinating the group stand and has great confidence in a successful participation. Although it is the first time that Macandia goes abroad, expectations are high. In order to attract visitors to the pavilion EXPROMA has made funds available to sponsor tasting sessions of national dishes during the daily happy hours on the stand.

The Macandian stand is located in Hall 3, stand C040. For more information contact EXPROMA.

Contact:

EXPROMA , fax: 00-374-23-150689, email info@exproma.com, www.exproma.com

2.9 Advertising in the trade press

If you want to make sure that your message is published, you may decide to have an advertisement placed. If you are considering advertising, do not associate it with mass media and mass advertising. Generally, mass media or so-called 'broadcasting' activities (i.e. targeting a very broad audience) are not suitable for exporters. Broadcasting is very expensive and is directly aimed at a wide audience of end users. Usually, you will benefit more from focussing on the players in the distribution channels: importers, wholesalers, retailers. You can do so by 'narrow-casting' (targeting a specific sector).

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in control of contents • sector coverage • independent from editor 	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expensive • limited feedback • repetition required <p><i>Particularly in trade magazines and trade fair exhibitors' catalogues</i></p>	<p>Advertisements</p>
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Trade magazines represent a good medium for advertising. Compared to mass media, the costs for advertising in these media are modest and they offer the advantage of a defined audience. Another possible medium for advertising is the exhibitors' catalogue of a trade fair you intend to participate in. The advantage here lies in the fact that many visitors will keep the catalogue as a reference book long after the fair is over.

2.9.1 Advertorials

An advertisement is an obvious commercial promotion. Sometimes, however, your message calls for subtlety. In such cases an advertorial may be the solution. An advertorial is an advertisement that looks like a press article but is in fact a paid advertisement. The trick is that it looks as if an independent editor has written it, as it corresponds with the editorial format and style of the magazine it is published in. Nevertheless, the purpose of an advertorial is to sell your products or services. A good advertorial is a creative blend of telling and selling.

To write an advertorial, first of all, you need a story – a story through which you can indirectly sell your products or services. Weave your sales text into that story. Start and end your advertorial with the story, fitting the sales text in between and never placing it at the beginning or the end of your story. Use quotes or testimonials, especially to highlight benefits. Do not use sales slogans or sales clichés. Like a press release, an advertorial must contain contact details for further information. Do not ruin the impact of your advertorial by mentioning prices, discounts or other sales promotions in the article – it would be very strange for an independent editor to make an offer in an article.



an advertorial is a not so obvious commercial promotion

2.10 Purchase offers underlining professionalism

You could say that the ultimate goal of all your image building efforts is to get a request for quotation (RFQ). Your carefully built image has given a customer sufficient trust and interest to invite you to make an offer. To get this far you have overcome many obstacles – and now you are very close to doing business. Would it not be an incredible waste if the way in which you present your offer would chase away the prospect in sight of a transaction?

*as a confused mind says
“NO”, make sure that your
purchase offer is clear,
specific, well-structured
and complete*

A confused mind always says “NO”! Therefore, make sure your purchase offer is clear, specific, well-structured and complete:

- date and reference number
- company details of seller and buyer
- description and specifications/quality of the products
- packaging specifications (per unit, carton, pallet)
- quantity total (in units, units per carton, cartons per pallet)
- price (currency, amount per unit and total amount)
- delivery terms (Incoterms)
- payment terms
- validity of offer
- waiver (without any obligations/subject to confirmation)
- general and special sales conditions.

2.11 News letters

A newsletter is an informal publication designed to deliver information to a specific audience at regular intervals. It may serve the purpose of informing your internal audience or an external audience. Here, we will focus on the external newsletter.

External newsletters can be sent to members, customers and past customers, prospects, suppliers and other stakeholders to keep them informed about positive business activity and growth, to reinforce your selling points, to build brand recognition and to cement your market position in a non-abrupt manner. External newsletters may include: staff profiles, customer profiles, information about new products/services, new business activity, staff changes, relevant events, advice, commentary on industry developments, research, awards/other business successes, and current business promotions/specials. Remember that although it is important to educate people about your business and what it has to offer, you must balance sales-related information with articles that are of genuine interest and value to the reader. Sometimes, you can display your capabilities through indirect means (e.g. through quality advice or through interesting industry comment), rather than with a loud sales pitch.

*balance sales-related
information with articles
that are of genuine
interest to the reader*

The length of a newsletter depends on the size of your business (large businesses often have more news to share) and on how frequently it is published. Usually the number of pages ranges from one to four. But do not create a four-page newsletter if you do not have enough interesting information.

A few tips for designing your newsletter:

- the lay-out should be visually appealing with plenty of white space
- make sure your corporate colours form the basis for the design
- have your logo clearly visible
- include interesting photos and graphics
- give your newsletter a catchy name that reflects your business
- a newsletter does not automatically have to be an A4 document – think creatively!
- once you have chosen a design, maintain it or stay close to it with each issue.

A few tips for content:

- newsletter articles should be short
- the writing style should be chatty and brisk
- include different topics in each edition
- people scan newsletters: use short, punchy headlines and summaries of longer articles
- set a recurring deadline by which contributors are to submit content to the editor.

Source : Sarah O'Brien – Is a Corporate Newsletter Better?



3

Digital image carriers

This chapter is about image carriers that reach your business relations electronically. First we will look at e-mails, then electronic direct mail, CD-ROMs and websites.

3.1 Writing effective e-mail messages

Is there anybody these days who does not write e-mails? Electronic post has reached enormous volumes, certainly in the business world. It is fast and cheap. An e-mail does not have to be formal, so you do not have to spend a lot of time on it. Or do you? Do not be mistaken. You do! The reason is that all your business correspondence gives some impression of your identity, thus influencing your image. That is certainly the case with electronic correspondence, or e-mails. Poor grammar and bad spelling tell the reader (whether an existing or potential client) you do not care about him or her all that much.

Like you, most e-mail users receive dozens of e-mails a day – and that is a conservative estimate. In that huge flow, it is crucial that your message is eye-catching and attention-grabbing. You have to ‘crash through the front door’ and state your purpose absolutely clearly in the first paragraph, in a short and snappy way. But then again, do not exaggerate – exaggeration is annoying. In that sense, an e-mail is no different from a traditional letter. Apart from an eye-catcher and a summary, the first paragraph should also provide the structure for the rest of your message.

So how do you start off? Begin with a greeting, or a brief word of thanks. Then write your main message in one or two short sentences, ending by stating what you expect from the reader. In the paragraphs that follow, you can give additional information or arguments and describe the advantages to the reader. The last paragraph should once more contain the core of your message, after which you sign off with a greeting.

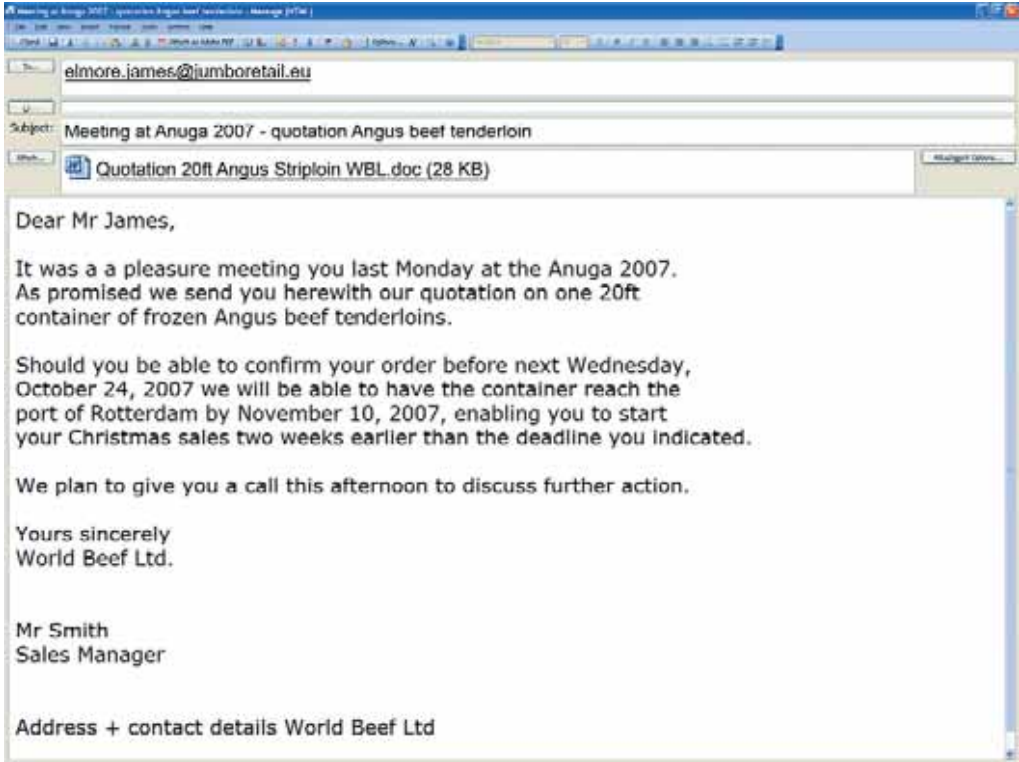
Just as a letterhead and a signature at the bottom of a traditional letter serve to show the reader who is the sender, your e-mails should include clear sender information. Always place your own name, company name, address, telephone and fax numbers at the bottom of your message – unless your contact(s) with the receiver are so frequent that you can afford to leave them out. If you are not sure where your message will end up, add your contact details. An electronic signature is sure to make a good and reliable impression on the people receiving your offers and other commitments.

In answering an e-mail message you have received, leave the subject line unaltered, so the receiver of your reply will know instantly what the message is about. Write your reply above the text you have received. Most e-mail programmes offer you the chance to request a ‘notification of receipt’. Do not expect every receiver to honour this request, certainly not if you add it to all your messages. The same applies to messages you label as ‘priority’. It is not advisable to deal with different subjects in one and the same e-mail. Instead, send separate e-mails, so that the receiver can open and/or file them separately. And finally, use your spelling check!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be direct • start with the main message • beware of spelling mistakes • do not forget your company address • place your reply at the top • restrict your use of requests for a notification of receipt and 'priority' tags • deal with different subjects in separate mails • keep in mind that e-mails also carry your identity • properly address first-time contacts or new business relations • do not start off in an informal way 	Hints for e-mail messages

Your EU business partners will expect your company to have a business e-mail account. Using a free e-mail account for business purposes will not convey a message of professionalism or help you establish a solid image. Of course, there is nothing wrong with having a personal free e-mail account and with sharing that address with business relations. As long as it is clear that it is your personal e-mail address and not that of your company. On the whole, EU business people prefer to 'talk' business via business e-mail accounts, so they can be sure the information exchanged travels to and from the right places.

How to write a professional e-mail (an example)



3.2 Electronic direct mail

The criteria for effective letters also apply to an electronic direct mailing campaign. The main problem here is: will the message be opened at all? Because sending e-mails is fast and cheap, the flow of e-mails is tremendous. As a result, European business people do not sit at their desks anxiously waiting for the next incoming e-mail message. Instead, when checking for e-mail, they frantically try to go through most of them, deleting many messages after having read only the subject line or the first line of the body text. Beyond that, there is the fear of being hit by a virus.

These are the main reasons why a promotional campaign based on e-mails, especially e-mails with attachments, may not generate the response you expect. In many cases, the message will be deleted from the 'Inbox' without even having been read.

In other words, do not overestimate the effect of running an electronic direct mailing campaign. If you decide to do it, always follow-up by fax, ordinary mail and telephone.

3.2.1 Spam

The EU law says the following about sending unsolicited commercial communications: Article 13(1) of the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive requires EU Member States to prohibit the sending of unsolicited commercial communications (SPAM) by fax or e-mail or other electronic messaging systems such as SMS and MMS, unless the prior consent of the addressee has been obtained (opt-in system).

The opt-in system is mandatory for any e-mail, SMS or fax addressed to natural persons for direct marketing. For legal persons it is optional; Member States may choose between an opt-in or an opt-out system.

For all categories of addressees, both legal and natural persons, Article 13(4) of the Directive prohibits direct marketing messages by e-mail or SMS which conceal or disguise the identity of the sender and which do not include a valid address to which recipients can send a request to cease such messages.

It is highly recommended to make sure you know which rules and regulations regarding the use of e-mail for direct marketing activities apply to you. Regardless of the rules, however, it is obvious that spamming can be very harmful to your image.

For access to the European Union Law visit:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

3.3 CD-ROMs: your virtual image

In addition to or in the place of corporate brochures, product sheets and product catalogues, presentations nowadays are often put on CD-ROM. A CD-ROM designed in a professional and user-friendly way can boost your image. But remember that a major disadvantage of CD-ROM presentations is that receivers cannot browse through them in any given place.

While a printed brochure can be explored in a few seconds for a first impression, a CD-ROM must first be inserted in the CD-ROM drive of a computer. Imagine the businessman who has been to a trade fair and received a CD-ROM with your company presentation. Having returned to his office, he will be confronted with mail on the desk, and new e-mails in his mail box. What will be his first priority? Chances are that the CD-ROM will be slipped into a quiet corner of his bottom drawer. On the other hand, a CD-ROM can be a very effective means of giving a multimedia presentation at an exhibition.



3.4 Websites that make sense

The Internet offers an additional medium for promotional campaigns and for establishing a strong image. Apart from the fact that 'Net Presence' - or having a website - is associated with being a modern, professional organisation, the Internet offers display possibilities and advertising space. Your company profile, brochures and catalogues can be digitalised and put on the web. By placing promotional materials online, you can save on printing costs, while still being able to update the information at any point in time without substantial costs. In other words, it is an economic and flexible option.

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast and flexible • 24 hrs global exposure • inexpensive • enhancing image <p><i>For company information, product details, order registration, on-line price and stock information</i></p>	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low click-through rate • regular updating necessary • intensive website promotion 	<p>Websites</p>
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3.4.1 How to develop and maintain an image-building website

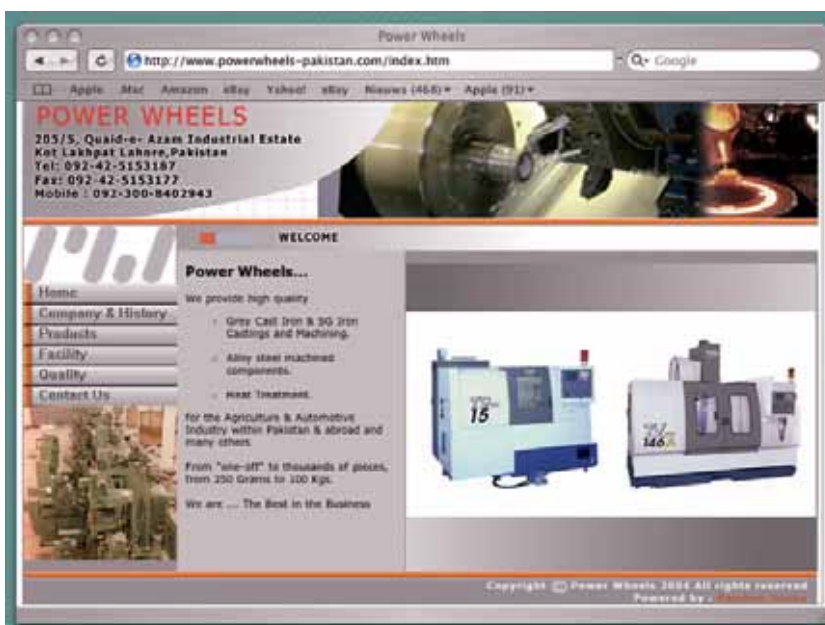
- Design the site in accordance with the desired corporate image.
- Build a site that is professional, attractive and fast!
- Grab and hold the visitor's attention: the website of your competitor is just one click away!
- Offer the most important information clearly and concisely (What would a potential customer want to know? What is your added value, your USP, testimonials etc.?).
- Text blocs must be short and to the point (web users do not read extensive texts).
- Offer a download option for background information, datasheets and annuals.
- Develop a logical and simple navigation system.
- Register the site with all well known search engines.
- Make sure your site is linked to other relevant websites.
- Check the links regularly.
- Update and renew the site regularly, so as to offer up-to-date information and to encourage repeat visits.
- Include a 'What's-new' page.
- Promote your site on all of your promotional materials.
- Track and profile visitors by offering an e-mail update service.
- Ask visitors for feedback.
- Offer an online helpdesk.

Web promotion is a must

Once you have a website, do not fall into the trap of sitting back and relaxing. Your website will not be effective as a promotional tool unless you actively attract your target group to visit it.

To help you attract the right visitors to your website, the CBI has developed a manual on website promotion. You can download it for free at our website:

www.cbi.eu/marketinfo



3.4.2 Online news room

Positive news about your organisation or products published by the trade press are a major image enhancer. Journalists may be the world's greatest experts when it comes to the Internet. When they put together articles or specials, chances are that if they do not find you or the information you have to offer on the net you will not be included in their write-ups.

One way of serving their needs and making life easy for them is to create an online news room. A useful online news room is a huge time- and money-saver and is not hard to produce.

If you are considering creating a news room, you should ask yourself: "Are we able to provide interesting news on a very frequent basis?" and "Are we able to keep the news room updated?". Obviously, it does not make sense to create a news room if you hardly ever have any interesting news or are unable to manage it properly. In practise, only the bigger organisations or institutional organisations maintain online news rooms.

Your news room should be a structured and easily accessible archive of everything that might interest journalists. For example: news releases, press conference agenda, events agenda, photo stock, corporate and executive publications, facts and figures, reports, policies, financial results, organisational structures, speeches, awards and so on. Easy access, seamless and quick navigation and interesting, up-to-date information are essential for any effective news room. Rather than requiring journalists to register or sign in for access, offer them the possibility to leave their e-mail address if they wish to be keyed in on your latest news.

The face you present to the media must be highly professional. Targeting journalists means avoiding any form of presentation that is showy, but slow and distracting. Make sure they can find what they are looking for quickly and effortlessly. A simple, easy-to-navigate and clean-looking news room is all they need. Your press releases should be placed in chronological order, with the most recent one at the top. Apply the rules of traditional press release writing.

Provide multiple versions of accompanying graphics: 72 dpi resolution materials for digital publications and 300 dpi resolution materials for printed publication. Make it easy for journalists to get the graphics they want by providing your releases with links.

Finally, one must-have element for every news room is a search tool with which visitors can search through all of your information.

3.5 E-news letter

An e-mail newsletter is a quick and cheap way to distribute news and information about your company. Another advantage over a printed newsletter is that with a digital version you can keep track of who opens your mail or how many people visit your website after you have sent it. An e-newsletter also allows you to time the moment your information pops up in the mailbox of the recipient. Its short production time, moreover, enables you to be as up-to-date as you want.

a news page on your website may seem interesting, but it will be counterproductive if it does not contain much real news, or if you fail to keep it updated

Disadvantages are the possible irritation your e-mails may cause with recipients and the fact that spam filters may hinder your e-newsletter from reaching the recipient at all.

Note that the more details you require from readers signing up for your e-newsletter, the more likely they are to back out. Encourage them to register by only asking for a few details, guarantee that you will protect their privacy and promise a unique benefit that is only for subscribers to your e-mail newsletter.

Here are some elements every newsletter should include:

- a procedure for signing up and signing out
- a link to your privacy statement
- the date of issue
- your complete company details.

For further instructions on content items, see under sub-heading, 2.11 'News Letters'. Bear in mind, however, that information shown on a screen tends to be scanned even more superficially than printed matter. Apply a direct writing style that will arouse interest, making proper use of intriguing headings and introduction texts, followed by 'Read more' links.

4 Personal image carriers

'Personal image carriers' are people who represent your company and, as such, have direct personal contact with business relations. In spite of, or perhaps thanks to, the enormous expansion of electronic communication media in the past ten years, personal contact is still decisive in reaching actual business agreements.

4.1 Personal visits that pay off

If you seriously plan to enter the export business, prepare for personal contact. Like all other business, export is carried out by people and based on personal relations. There is no better way to develop a relationship than through face-to-face contact. Make sure you know the key persons as well as the do's and don'ts, the cultural peculiarities, in your target market. Also make sure you understand the business and the needs of your prospect(s). Remember that often buyers will base their decisions on a personal relationship – especially if your product is not unique and there are a lot of competitors.

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal contact • immediate feedback • negotiating on the spot • partner assessment 	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time-consuming • high cost per contact • reluctance with buyers 	<p>Personal visits</p>
<p><i>Use selectively for well-defined prospects and existing clients. Also for follow-up activities and in markets with a limited number of potential buyers, and for market research.</i></p>		

4.1.1 Getting set for a visit

A personal visit to a customer or potential buyer requires thorough preparation. The basis for this preparation is made up of knowledge of the company, its products and/or services, the company management, production opportunities, its present market, references and insight into the needs of the business partner. The rest is up to you or your (sales) representative.

If your representative succeeds in answering the customer's needs with appropriate arguments, providing the right supporting evidence and presenting tailor-made solutions to existing problems, he or she will give a professional impression. His or her enthusiasm, professionalism, (self-)confidence, product and market knowledge, punctuality, transparency and reliability all contribute to a positive impression and, hence, a positive image.

4.1.2 What you should have at hand

If you want to establish a professional image with a potential client, do not visit empty-handed. Make sure that when you are there you can at least provide the information or items a client might reasonably expect from you given the purpose of the meeting, such as:

- literature
- product specifications
- production and export capacities
- samples
- data on sizes, weights
- packaging
- container quantities
- FOB and CIF prices
- duties and taxes
- shipping schedules, agents, rates
- conditions for agents/importers.

Armed with this information, you will find it easier to discuss product adaptations or to estimate a landed cost price on the spot. The purpose of all this is to show that you are a serious partner prepared for serious business and that you expect to establish at an early stage, together with the potential client, whether or not there is a basis for business. If your preparations exceed your clients' expectations, you will both benefit.

4.1.3 What to wear?

Dressing is another aspect of preparation that can strongly influence your image. Allow your common sense to dictate what you wear. In general, most professional salespersons dress for the occasion. At the same time, it is advisable to wear clothing in which you feel comfortable and self-assured, and that suits the sector in which you are active. Here are some guidelines:

Dressing for men

Avoid light-coloured clothing. It is safe to wear a medium dark blue, grey or brown suit. A blue shirt and conservative tie make a safe combination.

Dressing for women

Try to steer away from an overly casual look. It is usually acceptable to wear a medium dark, solid colour dress, a 'deux-pièces' or a tailored suit with a complimentary blouse. Do not wear flashy jewellery or anything that 'jingles'.

4.2 How to meet

You are going to a business meeting, because at least one of the parties involved has a specific reason for it. Reasons may vary from introducing one's company to closing a deal or solving a problem. So is there a fixed procedure for effective meetings? Not really. There are a lot of guidelines and do's and don'ts, but there is no rigid script. The effectiveness of your meetings depends largely on your ability to 'read' the situation. Still, there are some points to bear in mind for different types of meetings.

4.2.1 Meeting to get acquainted

Keep your introduction short. Explain in no more than five minutes who you are, what you do, what your aim is and why you wanted to visit this specific buyer. Keep it simple, so the buyer can make notes.

After your introduction, encourage your contact to take over and to start talking about his or her company and its needs. Ask questions at appropriate intervals. Show that you are interested and impressed, and make notes. Once you have analysed the information provided by the buyer, you are ready to qualify it and to create a win-win formula. Link the business and the needs of your potential customer to the benefits you can provide. Give more in-depth details about yourself, your company and its products/services and present arguments to prove why you are a suitable business partner.

This is the point at which you have to display your understanding of your customer's business and need. It is also the moment for establishing your knowledge about your own products, specifications, production costs, relevant international marketing issues like planning, development procedures, standards, logistics and contractual terms. The positive, professional image you give at this stage of the meeting will provide your potential partner with more of a buying argument than a sharp price will. Remember that reliability is crucial to establishing a long-term relationship!

4.2.2 Meeting to sell

Selling requires a careful strategy, although it does depend on the level of the sales track. You will not get many chances (if any) to start again. Once you go wrong, it will be very difficult to find your way back and come out on top. It is helpful to be aware of the phase of the sales track in which you find yourself at the moment of the meeting. Is this your first meeting following a request for an offer, are you going to present your offer, or are you there to close the deal? The way you conduct your meetings in the various phases of the sales track will heavily influence the outcome.

In the acquisition phase

Every sales book will tell you that 'asking questions' is the key to success in selling. But what exactly are you going to ask? It would be rather pretentious of us to tell you exactly what to ask. But what we do know is that the person posing the questions is the one in charge of the conversation. Obviously, you have set yourself a goal for the meeting. To achieve that goal, it helps to be in charge of the meeting rather than merely reacting to the other person's moves.

You ask questions to discern the (hidden) motives behind your business partner's choices or, in other words, to find out why he may or may not buy from you.

Needs assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify your customer's needs 2. quantify your customer's needs 3. time your customer's needs

Example of scoring a buying signal

A buying signal from prospect: "Can you instruct our employees for us?"

Seller scoring the signal: "Of course we can. It would make the implementation of the new software application much easier for you. Shall I add it to the project actions?"

Expect to receive buying signals throughout the sales cycle

Selling becomes much easier if your offer is tailored to the customer in all aspects. Here are issues you must gain knowledge about during your meetings:

- the company of the buyer
- the market and the products/services of the company
- the buying structure of the company
- the buying procedure
- the buyer himself
- the use the buyer has for your products/services.

Make sure you obtain enough information to be able to calculate the advantages of your products/services over the alternatives and to determine which next step will bring you closer to your ultimate goal: an order.

In the sales phase

In the sales phase you present your offer and try to close the deal. Ideally, each and every offer you make is accepted. The reality, however, tells another story. You or your sales representative will need to work hard to convince and score. The way you present your offer and work towards closing the deal may, in the end, be decisive.

There are various ways to present your offer: by letter, by e-mail, by fax or through a personal presentation. Let us have a closer look at the latter.

On the road to closing the deal it is necessary that:

- your offer meets the requirements of your customer
- you present your offer in a clear and understandable way
- you take away obstacles by posing solid and valid arguments
- you cash in on buying signals by embedding them into the implementation or execution track which is to follow the order
- you ask for the order.

Taking away obstacles (disagreements, objections, doubts, second thoughts et cetera) is of the utmost importance. Obstacles will hinder you from getting the order, and if you fail to remove them they will keep resurfacing. When confronted with an obstacle, do not panic. Obstacles can be useful, as they may provide additional information. First listen, then try to remove the obstacle.

Here are some do's and don'ts in taking away obstacles:

- show empathy and understanding
- take notice of the customer's body language
- if the issue is not totally clear to you, ask the customer to elaborate
- ask what the customer feels is the decisive issue at the heart of the obstacle
- explain and be honest about your limitations
- provide a solution
- verify acceptance of the solution provided
- do not carry on your point
- do not hide away or lose confidence
- do not interrupt or react immediately
- do not ignore the matter
- do not blame the customer for raising the issue.

an obstacle not removed will resurface sooner or later in the sales track and keep you from closing the deal

Is there a chronological order in which to present your offer? Not really. But a helpful rule of thumb is to begin by presenting your solution to the customer's 'problem', then to tell about your competences in this field and finally to present the costs. Changing the sequence means shifting your emphasis to other aspects of your offer. Generally, you will name your price at the end of the offering phase, so as to emphasise the solution, your competences and the customer benefits.

Remember that price negotiations only make sense if your business partner is seriously interested in doing business with you. If you are not certain about that, it may suffice to tell him there is room for negotiation but that you do prefer not to go into exact figures at this stage. Always prepare yourself for having to negotiate. Rather than giving away a discount, try to trade off the discount.

Like the first impression, the last impression is important. Pay attention to how you end your meeting. Summarising the meeting, agreeing on the 'next step' and engaging in a brief social conversation are all elements of a proper goodbye.

4.3 Networking

There are numerous ways to establish contact with customers and prospects and it should not be difficult to find reasons for contacting them. The fact that building and maintaining a business network is vital for business is proved by the extensive number of study books and workshops dealing with this topic. In Your Image Builder we will take a closer look at the one way of networking, which despite the many study materials expounding on it, seems to remain difficult for many business people: the network meeting. Let us just be honest: a lot of people attending a network meeting show more interest in their coffee cup than in their network partners – perhaps to hide the fact that they do not quite know how to converse.

Hints for network meetings:

- prepare: check the attendance list beforehand and decide who you want to meet and why (determine your goals)
- establish contact with one of the organisers beforehand so that on arrival you will have at least one familiar face to look for
- remember to take on the right attitude, as your attitude is your most important asset at this type of meeting
- seize networking opportunities as soon as you arrive and do not wait till you are in the room
- when checking in, verify who has arrived already
- view the people at the meeting as individuals, not as a mass entity
- have a one-minute 'elevator pitch' ready (see below)
- have at least a few 'opening' questions (small talk) ready to open the conversation
- approach people who are by themselves or smaller groups of people: seek contact with those who will probably appreciate your company
- ask open-ended questions and turn answers into two-way communication
- avoid spending too much time at the bar or in dead areas
- exchange business cards when this is appropriate and relevant
- the golden rule for networking: give and you will receive.

4.3.1 The elevator pitch

At a networking meeting the way people present themselves is crucial for first impressions. Having a so-called one-minute elevator pitch ready is essential. The elevator pitch is a concise, clear and carefully practised description of your company.

The best elevator pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• has a stimulating opening• has the target group in mind• lasts 20 to 60 seconds• is brought with enthusiasm• ends with a question or call to action
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When you are preparing your elevator pitch, think goals, not means. Have the target group in mind, compose a draft pitch and cut out irrelevant information and words. Remember, a hundred words will last around 40 seconds. Last but not least, rehearse your elevator pitch before using it.

4.4 Making trade fair participation worthwhile

Fairs and exhibitions are among the most efficient and effective tools for communicating with an export market. In light of the fact that trade fair participation means full exposure to the markets and their buyers, the way a company presents itself at a trade fair is a matter of top priority. Your presentation will reflect not only on your products or services, but also on you personally, your company and even your country. At a fair, you are totally exposed – not only your capabilities, but also any weaknesses you may have. So a fair is a strong tool for establishing a good image, but an equally strong tool for establishing a poor image.



MOTORTEC '07. By courtesy of IFEMA (Madrid, Spain), Fototeca, Fernando Madariaga

<p>pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concentration of buyers • audience is interested • presence of unknown prospects • full exposure 	<p>cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong competition • information overkill • advanced planning • high investment 	<p>Trade fair participation</p>
<p><i>An efficient and effective tool of communication provided it is thoroughly planned and prepared and based on a long-term strategy</i></p>		

4.4.1 Stand behaviour: a critical success factor

Spectacular stands or displays may be beyond the reach of smaller companies. But they are not essentially what potential buyers are looking for. What buyers hope to encounter is capable stand staff: representatives who are thoroughly familiar with specifications, production costs, relevant international marketing issues like planning, development procedures, standards, logistics, and contractual terms – the kind of representative they would like to encounter in a personal business meeting.

The behaviour of your stand representative is of crucial importance. He or she is expected to show a positive attitude, to approach visitors eye-to-eye and to initiate contact with a smile and a greeting. As a stand representative, make sure you give a fresh and energetic impression. Show interest in the visitor. Limit drinking and eating and avoid smoking while manning your stand. Keep the stand neat and tidy, and, whatever you do, do not use that quiet moment for a quick snooze. Create a reliable image.



Qualify your visitor

Inquire after your visitor's interests, the nature of his company, his or her function and authority. This will not only help you establish whether further discussion is worthwhile, but also, if it is, which direction to pursue.

Know your products inside out

Make sure you are completely familiar with production processes and what adaptations and alterations would be possible. Emphasise the advantages of your products over competitive products and the benefits for the buyer. Bear in mind that the interests of a purchasing manager will differ from those of a technical manager.

Be honest and realistic

Never fake an answer; do not promise what you cannot deliver.

Speak slowly and clearly

At most European fairs you can get by with English. Sometimes, however, an unfamiliar accent can make communication difficult.

Wear a name badge

This will ensure that you can be easily recognised as the stand holder.

Keep fit

Manning a stand can be tiring, particularly if you have had a long journey to get there. It is not a good idea to party all night before or during the fair. Make sure you get enough sleep. Your composure matters.

Make notes on the spot

Make use of buyer contact forms as a vital source of information. They may serve as a lead for discussions and will make a professional impression on your visitor. You can give the visitor a copy of the form to confirm what has been discussed.

Follow-up at all times

If you have promised follow-up, always keep your promise. Silence is killing. Bear in mind that failing to follow up will jeopardise the image of your company as well as that of your country.

4.4.2 Give-aways

Promotional items can, if properly used, serve several purposes. They can help you draw visitors to your stand, generate more leads or turn leads into business. You can also use them to express gratitude to visitors for visiting your stand or as a souvenir to remind them of your company or product long after the show is over. Supporting your exhibition theme or proposition with them can also be effective. However, promotional items can also be perceived as an 'empty' gesture, in which case they are a waste of time and money.

Here are 10 considerations to bear in mind deciding on using give-aways:

- choose give-aways that match your goals
- choose give-aways that match your target groups
- involve stand staff and the premium supplier in your choice
- make sure your give-aways are not too breakable
- have special give-aways for VIPs
- be selective in handing out your give-aways
- if you can use them at more than fair, buy them in bulk
- put your contact details on the give-away
- link the give-away to a questionnaire or game
- do not forget the press when you are passing around give-aways.

4.5 Telephone calls: meeting without seeing

Meeting without seeing – on the phone, for instance – requires good manners and style.

4.5.1 Making calls

How to go about making a phone call:

- set yourself clear (primary and secondary) goals for each phone call
- be ready before you call: be informed, have additional information at hand, concentrate, remove sources of disturbance et cetera
- make sure you reach and talk to the right person
- keep your opening simple and interesting, explain why you are calling
- try to establish two-way communication, ask questions
- close with a commitment
- follow-up on the commitment.

Although people cannot see you from the other end of the line, somehow they can sense you. Therefore, when you are on the phone, smile, be warm and enthusiastic, use your hands while talking and, for an important call, stand up. It will help you a lot.



4.5.2 Taking calls

How to go about taking calls:

- note the time and date of the call
- verify and record the caller's name, company name and phone number
- ask for and write down a short statement about the purpose of the call
- put your name or initials on the note as a reference.

4.6 After sales versus customer service

The deal is closed. You have done a good job. Now what? Many salespersons confuse the word after sales with customer service and miss out on important opportunities. The crucial difference between after sales and customer service lies in how the customer experiences working with you or your organisation. Good customer service is something he may expect, but good after sales will surprise him and make him

come back for more business. After sales are about giving your customer a positive feeling about the deal he or she has done. It is aimed at closing new deals in the future. After sales, therefore, should be part of your sales activities, not of your customer service.

Some tips on how to make your after sales work:

- without promising too much, give or do something extra
- contact your customer after delivery or implementation to make sure he or she is satisfied
- plan a few future contact moments in your diary, but also make use of spontaneous occasions for contacting your partner (like congratulating him or her on a job promotion et cetera)
- inform the customer if something has not gone according to agreement before he or she finds out him or herself.

Good after sales can set you apart from others. They will cost you a bit of time, but can produce great customer loyalty. Quite likely, your customer will spread the word about your after sales and thus actually start selling for you.

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Reader's notes



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